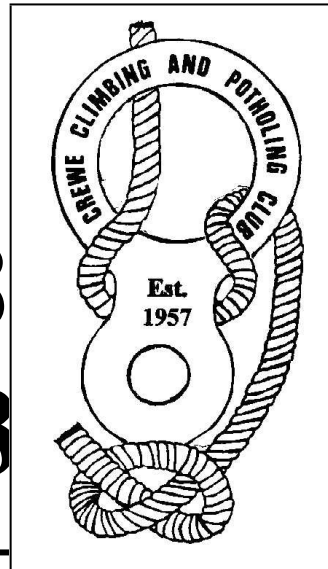


C.C.P.C.

Newsletter 78

Summer 2003

Log on to www.ccpc.org.uk



Answer to “Get out of that!”

Remember the incident on Idiot’s Leap in the last newsletter?

Suggested solution: It’s always handy to carry a short length of SRT rope with you for such emergencies. Around 8m of 8mm is excellent for accessing somebody hung up on a pitch- a longer piece is even better but would probably get left behind! Perhaps you should have a couple of different lengths and take whatever seems suitable for the trip- it’s even more important when you have beginners with you. If you don’t have a piece to hand you can always use the cord off your foot jammer- even better if it’s tied with bowlines (and bowline on the bight) which are easily undone. A short piece of 5mm Kevlar (Dyneema/Spectra) is even better. Despite being pricey it’s non-stretch, stronger than steel and six times more abrasion resistant than nylon. On top of all that it floats!!

In this particular case – climb up past the casualty, attach a piece of cord in such a way that a counterbalance can be arranged. Clip one end into the harness of the casualty then put the counterbalance on the other end- in this case yourself- using your Croll. (Don’t forget cow’s tails). As you go down they come up. If the rope is trapped below them cut it beneath their Croll. Normally the cord would go through a pulley- jammer (or mini Traxion) but here the distance is very short and time is running out. With a little practice this whole operation should take about a minute from reaching the pitch head- don’t believe me? get some practice then try it. Oh and incidentally the emergency gear is best carried in a suitable container underground not left behind on the surface!

Ok so hindsight is a wonderful thing- but it could happen again. Could YOU cope?

P. Ton. Equipment Adviser.

Perhaps this is a good time to advertise (again) the DCRO rescue course on May 10th! £20.00 sounds cheap to me if it saves a life- especially yours!

Cave Fire.

Not a likely occurrence you might think and generally you would be right. Especially when those concerned are experienced cavers and not odd bods looking for a different venue for a few cans a camp fire and dancing round a Ghetto Blaster.

But strange things do happen.

We had been caving in quite arduous conditions for several hours and for a couple filming had been taking place, to record the beauty of the cave for posterity once this was complete all the gear was packed away and we started to make our way out of the very tight and nasty crawl leading back to fresh air and daylight.

The idea of getting out of this tight arm aching, neck contorting, helmet pushing, chest squeezing, heavy breathing enjoyment for a day off was singularly attractive. Ann Soulsby, who was towing 3 inordinately heavy bags, kept using small child on a long journey psychology, nearly there Tom, I can see daylight. That's not to say I was whinging, can't have been, just not possible, a physiological impossibility, you need breath for whinging, I could not expand my chest far enough for breathing and was using all I had for aerobic activity. But it was strangely comforting.

Then what, now what, what's happening, NOW? Stop and film, Ralph Spielberg Johnson wants some more footage. Its incomprehensible, may be not, may be its ok, I'll have a sleep.

Jenny, who is wet through got a suit full of grit, not well and had an epic earlier catches me up and cheerily says, "doing well not much further now "

Ann and Ralph are discussing what's going to be filmed, whats gong to be filmed? its 2 feet wide and 9 inches high, everyone looks the same mud colour, so choices are limited. But it's a nice rest, I've shut my eyes, the thoughts of high levels of carbon dioxide becoming known & bleeping oxygen monitors float through my head, I open my eyes, ah good they still open.

Smell, whats that smell??, its alien to caving and I am alert, Ralph is saying "nearly on fire" FIRE in this confined space, smell equals fumes, fumes equal combustion of something and the only combustible material caving is plastics and that's not good. Funny how a couple of words can suddenly provide such clarity of thought.

They did for Ralph to, he ripped off the battery connections and slammed the lid closed. Then calmly set about opening the other bag for the other lamp.

Filming complete, we set off again for the elusive child's goal, just around the next corner.

Soon it appeared for real, I do enjoy caving, I really enjoyed writing this trip up in my log book, I really enjoyed adding another name to my list of caves visited. I really enjoyed the cave features and helping film them. One day I may feel the excitement of another trip to Sidetrack and when that day comes, I'll open a beer and watch this bloody video.

And finally, next time an email arrives saying thin cavers wanted, I shall just chuck it in the recycle bin.

By Tom Bailey 2003

Sidetrack videos are on sale at £7.95 in aid of DCRO.

NCA Rope Tests.

You may recall CCPC being given 30 m 10mm rope by the NCA as part of a testing programme. Our rope was returned after 800 uses (a "use" being one up or down) Here is the initial reply from Bob Mehw.

I managed to test over the weekend three samples from the rope sample NCA 00 J which you kindly use for 799 usages. The results were as follows:

Sample 1 (first 2.5m) held for drop 1 @ FF1 and drop 2 @ FF1 and drop 3 @ FF1.1. Failed in drop 4 @ FF1.2

Sample 5 (sample from 10 to 12.5m along rope) held for drop 1 @ FF1 and drop 2 @ FF1. Failed in drop 3 @ FF1.1

Sample 11 (sample from other end of rope) held for drop 1 @ FF1 and drop 2 @ FF1 and drop 3 @ FF1.1. Failed in drop 4 @ FF1.2

I have thus another 8 samples to finish testing a sample from every 2.5m part of the rope.

It is worth noting that Sample 5 was chosen because of glazing which had managed to smear the black markers along the rope and also showed a degree of ovality (typical 10.3mm and 11.1mm at right angles measured by vernier). I am a bit bemused by this measurement (repeated 8 times at 50 cm intervals) given the rope was originally claimed to be 10mm. I need to get a micrometer which will measure the rope using a uniform pressure to see if the vernier was misreading.

I hesitate to comment on the significance between the results and have yet to work out relative extensions of the rope between drops. It is worth bearing in mind that Owen's work on the 7 "original as new" samples showed an average failure in drop 7; though he measured a spread of failures between 5 and 9 drops!

Bob Mehw. NCA

PS. A number of you complained about a knobbly piece of Beal- I wrote to Bob about getting it tested. Here is his reply.

Other major point is how do you want it sampled, given it means cutting the rope up into parts? Knobblyness suggest the kernel has slipped and bunched within the sheath, presuming the sheath is smooth. (I like the other thought of work hardening the kernel even less [i.e. it loses its ductility and becomes brittle].) Can you test for ovality (i.e. measure diameter at right angles where it seems different) and also for changes with degree of knobblyness? I am a bit concerned that cutting may cause the knobbles to work loose, so perhaps testing parts of the rope and then cutting them out might be better than you sampling. Up to you as to how much rope you wish to donate to the cause of science.

Other direct piece of info you can get is to cut the rope lengthwise and see how the marker tape (usually 3 mm wide with name etc on it) looks. Marker tapes in new ropes are nice and smooth; where as in old ropes they become concertinaed. If you can read the tape it will also tell you the date of manufacture.

T'owd Mon visits The Black Country!

An unusual call- out came from The Black Country Museum via a local Potteries Museum at Apedale, an old drift mine where 2 CCPC members work as volunteers. Basically repairs were required to the pumping system down a 40' shaft. For the technically minded the pump rod is driven through a beam and chain arch head via an exact copy of the world's first steam engine built by Newcomen in 1712. Needless to say the engine is a major working exhibit and centrepiece of the museum complex.

CCPC had been called in due to the fact that conventional ladders are not permitted down the shaft under Health & Safety Regulations. The team consisting of Nigel Cooper, Lionel Parkinson and Len Kirkham arrived with only a vague idea of what was required but, armed with enough, stilsons, lump hammers and chisels to ruin anything presented to them and enough rope access gear to impress even Petzl.

Lionel was appointed banksman and Nigel volunteered Len as first man down. *"Thay goo fost, thay at mower used ter goin dine owd shafts then may"* said Nigel using his impeccable Potteries miners dialect that must have been incomprehensible to the onlookers!

A quick inspection revealed the ramshackle condition of the machinery in the shaft due to a total lack of maintenance, with worn and corroded clack box bolts, the plunger clack box hanging loose and wear strips in the shaft bottom sump etc. (non-technical readers should ignore this bit!) – time for a second opinion!

Within minutes more rope appeared as did a power cable and pump to drain the sump. All attempts to dismember the 6" bore cast iron pump work defied the earlier mentioned technology so a "gofer" was despatched returning with an angle grinder.

At this point the team surfaced for lunch, much to the amazement of the paying public, and were escorted to the pit canteen for a delicious traditional meal of *"mushy paize n faguts"*

On returning to the job the grinder soon made short work of the eight $\frac{3}{4}$ " bolts on each flange, the problem now was getting the massive lumps of metal up the shaft. This job was left to Lionel & Nigel who accomplished the job using a complex system of jammers and pulleys that would have impressed even the DCRO training officer! By now Len was feeling queasy due to the deterioration in the air quality in the shaft, no doubt caused by gastronomic problems-a side effect of the *"mushy paize"* previously consumed in the canteen.

As evening approached the team left for the Potteries leaving behind a list of "must haves" for completing the work. Two weeks later the team were back on site and the pump was reassembled ready for the "Steaming Up" at Easter.

Needless to say all this was done on a voluntary basis, as insufficient funding appears to be available for even basic maintenance at this World Heritage Site. It is a sad reflection on today's rule makers that sites like this cannot operate on a more viable common sense basis.

Len K. & Nigel C.

Hill House Copper Mine (update)

Work has recommenced on this very old mine to gain access through a blockage on the adit. The “stoos” windlass is to be put back on the shaft near the trig point for the “mid week mob”

Limestone Mine, Limekiln Farm. (update)

The rubbish tipped down the main shaft has been wound up in builders bags by drawing it up the shaft via a head gear and old SRT rope coupled to Mr Potts’s old tractor. The skill involved in driving the tractor and John Martins interpretation of our wild gesticulations and profanities was quite remarkable as the bag approached the pulley on the head gear. (We managed to snap the rope at one point!)

Access has been gained to a fall just short of the lake. A decline exists that was probably used as a pumpway. This is in the process of being cleared out prior to another pumping session.

Mixon Mine.

The Mixon Mine “sett” was the second largest in the county (Ecton being the largest) The workings extended 600’ below sough level are now flooded, however 150’ of very old workings are believed to be accessible.

Access to this mine has been denied for 30 years but a change of ownership has resulted in access being granted for exploration. My impression is that the owners will render any help they can given a responsible approach by us.

Len Kirkham.

Well, well, well!

Another strange request for CCPCs expertise. It turned out to be a 50’ well in Leek. Darren, Len, Nigel and Ralph answered the call. Interesting but not terribly exciting but yet another satisfied customer! Even the occupants of the property explored the hidden depths although a hauling system was required during the exit.

Within days of our “exploration” of the above well a request came for us to look at a well in Nottinghamshire. Ralph & “Big Andy” visited this one that turned out to be about 100’ deep with 14’ of water in the bottom. The remains of the old pumping system were still in place (JUST- due to the rotten woodwork) and a further visit may be required to “tidy things up” as the owners wish to convert it into a “feature” in their new extension.

Peak-Speedwell.

Thanks to Len’s engineering prowess a number of members, friends et al have been involved in repair work on the fixed ladders in Peak-Speedwell. Treasury, FawltTowers are completed and Egnaro Aven is well on the way.

Hillock s “Sump”

Conclusions of a pumping operation conducted by CCPC et al 23 4 03

A sump exists at the end of a level in Hillocks Mine Monyash known to the explorers as the S west Cross Cut Sump. Access was by SRT down the 200’ Wharf Engine Shaft. Pumping equipment etc was lowered and raised by winch for speed and convenience. This enabled the whole operation to be completed in approx six hours with a workforce of five.

Evidence of early mining can be seen in the form of hand picked levels throughout the workings at different horizons though most are victims of reworking with gunpowder. A clear example of this is illustrated in the main cartgate from the engine shaft chamber to the above cross cut, where a complete hand picked level is intact in the roof, the floor having been blasted out with powder to form the main gate, a more detailed description can be found elsewhere. The cross level consists of a blind stope like working, quite low, due to reworking and backfilling with deads. Near the end, the floor dips down steeply due to a decrease in the depth of infill, estimated at 3m, based on observations in the dewatered forefield.

This “dip” is permanently flooded to almost floor level, and the object of the pumping operation, the exercise being to establish if the level continues below the flooded roof. As the water level dropped a gently dipping bedding plane was revealed with a large quantity of water issuing into the sump along the bedding- the reason for the flooding.

As pumping progressed deads were removed to a depth of 2.5 metres to reveal a section of original floor with the forefield sloping back down the “dip” towards the level.

Below the normal water perch, surprisingly large and uniform shot holes approx 24” long and 1 ¼ “ diam. were noted driven vertically downward. Contemporaneous holes have not been seen, at least by the writer, in other parts of the mine, and probably represent late stage reworking with compressed air drilling.

Earlier work in the roof can be seen that represents the original driveage, with shot holes of 7/8” diam, possibly dating from the 1750s or earlier, given the history of this place. It will be noted when descending the engine shaft that yet another size of drill hole is in evidence i.e. 1” diam. Which should allow accurate dating of the shaft.

Conclusion.

A calcite vein can be seen in the centre of the heading with a vertical groove picked out. This may have been a lead scrib that was followed in the hope that it would belly out with depth., a reasonable speculation. However in this instance no such vein was found.

Len Kirkham CCPC. PDMHS.

Vandalism in Carlsark Cavern.

On a recent novice-training trip I was horrified to see the amount of damage done to the calcite floor in Eyam Passage. A fair amount of the floor had been damaged with large pieces of 1” thick calcite lying about in pieces varying from around the size of a dinner plate down to tiny fragments. There is no way this damage was accidental, whoever did it must have hone in well prepared with at least a lump hammer. Investigations are under way- if anyone can help in naming the culprits please contact the DCA.

Ralph J.

Members 2003.

The following list shows those who have paid up for this year. The letter **I** indicates you are insured with DCA (via CCPC) **N** means you are not (but hopefully are insured via another club) Please check the list for errors & omissions. Nobody's perfect!!

N Cooper I	M Lovatt I	T Conde I	J Martin I
M Freeman I	J Shenton I	B Edmonds I	R Farmer I
L Kirkham I	R Johnson I	M Johnson N	J Shallcross I
S Knox I	P Nixon I	J Gillet N	D Conde I
A Scragg I	S Brandwood I	M Kraus I	L Parkinson I
N Conde I	M Fenton I	G Williams I	K Wood N
N Wood N	A Banner I	P Shackleton I	P Holdcroft I
T Campbell I	S Evans I	P Gamble I	T Gamble I
R Evans I	J Drake I	M Horrobin I	J Hall I
T Bailey I	M Ryan I		

For info: insurance £5, Full membership £16, Associates £8.

Stok Kangri.

Several members have expressed a desire to climb Stok Kangri a peak in the Himalayas. Height 6153m and situated in Ladakh, N India the peak is straightforward as long as time is taken to acclimatise thoroughly although some experience of crampons and ice axe are advisable. Ladakh, often referred to as "little Tibet" is a beautiful country largely unspoilt with a Buddhist population. Stok Kangri makes an ideal trek for those not wishing to attempt the summit, you simply get an extra day in bed or admiring the views. We ESTIMATE the cost at between £1200 & £1500 and the trip will last 3 weeks during August-July 2004. If you are interested contact Ralph or better still Darren.

The Chinese Way

This is an extract from our daily logbook for the 11th March 2003 and is by no means exceptional being fairly typical of our caving experiences in China. We did much, much, sillier climbs and trips into the cave over the course of the mapping contract but this is memorable for our having little choice but to follow blindly.

Duncan Collis and Erin Lynch are fellow Hong Meigui members. Since none of us enjoy the sketching role when surveying we were taking it in turns to do book – with the rule that whoever's turn it was also got to decide where we went although, as with this day, we were subject to the whims of the company. Mr Yang was a local who accompanied us most days and who knew the cave reasonably well (not this bit it transpired) and was also an excellent climber. Julia Tian and Kevin Chen were members of different outdoor clubs in China and were predominantly climbers. Apple Liu had joined us as a translator and not as a caver. Mr Shen is the showcave manager and Mr Zhang an employee. We had 30m of rope as requested but no bolts, harnesses or SRT gear, just one battery belt and a couple of slings and krabs between us. We'd been mapping the same cave every day for nearly a month and this day got underground shortly before midday. We took the best part of a week off immediately afterwards to go to Chengdu, a few hours coach ride away to an expensive hotel but all on expenses. Julia never came caving with us again and Kevin went back to work. Apple enjoyed herself thoroughly and is fast becoming a very competent caver.

There are some photos of the cave and cavers at www.mdryan.net/gallery/LuShan and as always the survey and more photos will eventually appear at www.hongmeigui.net

2003-5-11

A through trip

Duncan, Erin, Matt, Apple, Julia, Kevin, Yang, Shen, Zhang + lots of farmers, some with agricultural implements and non with decent lights.

Approached in the morning by the manager Shen and told that, since I was the leader today (was I?), we would be going to another cave instead which was rumoured to connect. Oh, and could we bring 30m of rope with us. Set off en-masse to said entrance, where a few farmers joined us from the fields, and set off crawling downhill. Then uphill. Around bends. The downhill again – to a big chamber, at last – maybe this wouldn't take all week to survey after-all. Back uphill in a couple of long legs then back down in a different direction – off the page tastic with no idea whatsoever which direction we'd be heading next, plus lots of big junctions and qms and it wasn't even lunchtime. A couple more longish legs downhill and the instrument team went on strike, starting to eat lunch. There was nothing for it but to do likewise and a good job too – a leg or two more and we'd have been surveying underwater. Were it not for this apparently new obstacle of a sump, we were supposedly just five minutes from a connection. "Never fear" said the farmers (well, they would have done had they been speaking in English), "there's another way around – but it's a bit of a trek". So a few headed out but most of us set off back up slopes, along hading passages, the works. Eventually we were told we could "keep surveying 'til 5 o'clock" but then we really must hurry since it was still "quite a long way". A couple of time consuming legs later and we jacked just before I went off the page at five.

Erin went back out the way we came in while Duncan and I joined the horde for the thru' trip – predicted at about an hour and a half. Lots of stomping, climbing, crawling, pretty bits, combined tactics and even jumping down off cliffs onto the opposite bank of a canyon before I finally heard a cry from Duncan, "Oh f*ck right off. You must be joking. Come and see what these silly f*ckers want us to do now." I squeezed my way to the front and traversed out and down for a better view before I started to make my reassuring noises. "It's not too bad", "It looks doable on a belay belt – or maybe even as a hand-line", "This must be what the rope's for." We set about trying to establish a few vital facts – had they been down it before? Was this the only pitch in the connection? Did they have any plans for getting down it? What about getting Julia, Kevin and Apple down it? There seemed to be general murmurs in Chinese of "It'll be fine, lets get on with it" and I was certainly game – although I think Duncan thought I was just as mad as the Chinese contingent for trusting them. We rigged a pull through off a conveniently poised boulder and I set off down for an inspection. "It'll be 'reet" I called to Duncan, who still didn't believe me, but one of the farmers apparently did, at least he joined me at the bottom, hand-over-hand with his torch in his mouth. As an experiment I got to the base of the overhanging bit on a handline with no struggle whatsoever and declared to Duncan that I'd trust Yang to get Apple down safely one way or another, reckoned Julia and Kevin could probably look after themselves and Duncan could do it on a ten finger rack easy enough. Yang let Apple abseil on an Italian hitch while he life-lined on a second. The only minor worry being the fact he had to pass the krabs to Duncan to get him to tie the knots. Julia and Kevin were lowered on a 2:1. Yang made like a spider and Duncan had a go at it the farmers' way, removing bits of skin in the process – I'd apparently neglected to mention the steepness of the 'slope' below the overhang. By now it was getting rather late and neither of our guides torches were producing any useful light, Kevin's had long since failed, the Tikka clones were even dimmer

than normal and Duncan was well into his second battery – the first having failed just inside the entrance. We were delighted to hear that this was still only about half way. Hoping Yang's light still had plenty of charge and glad mine lasts for days (but wondering if that would be enough), we continued to follow our fearless leaders.

Kevin's lack of light made itself known on a traverse at the top of a canyon.

Grabbing hold of Yang neither of them descended very far although Yang's bag did, necessitating a climb down to what looked like easier going, so we all followed for about eight metres until there was a passage heading off back at roof height. "This looks familiar" announced Apple as we passed through yet more featureless stooping passage into a chamber. 'This looks blind' announced everyone else after a bit of a poke about. With a bit less faith we followed our guides along a crawl a few yards back from the chamber which, to our surprise, soon dropped out in a fair size passage with reasonable draught – and not totally dissimilar in character to the passages near the sump where we had eaten lunch many hours earlier.

It was however becoming increasingly obvious to one and all that our guides no longer had a clue where they were going, especially when they showed no recognition on coming across ravines to jump across in very committing and surely memorable moves. On a couple of occasions we sat in the dark while they hunted for anything identifiable. We on the other hand did identify a bit which, discounting mass déjà vu, probably meant we'd been going around in circles for a while. At about this stage we spotted Julia hiding behind a rock sucking the juice out of an empty packet of shredded beef as though it were to be her last meal for a very long time. Eventually, after many shouts of joy, we set off into an obscure crawl with only limited draught, but at least there were footsteps on the other side for the guides to follow – which was good since they admitted to having never been into that part of the cave before.

Another half an hour or so sitting in the dark and we were going to have mutinied and by means fair or foul gotten ourselves out but now for some reason we decided to give them another chance to prove themselves and so trailed behind the torchless guides yet again.

Someone shouted back "another pitch, we need the rope". Duncan and I pretended not to hear. More shouts, "they need the rope, bring the rope". "They can fuck right off then" we shouted back. We then patiently explained that pull through trips when you haven't got a clue where you're going are generally considered "A bad idea". "But we do know!". "No you don't, that's obviously bullshit, you haven't known where we've been for the last three hours and just have no better ideas as to what we should do next." "But we're at the top of the climb we were at the bottom of last week." "Really?" "Really." "Are you sure?" "Certain." We still didn't believe them but not really fancying the free-climb of the last pitch, nor for that matter most of the rest of the journey, we rigged it off a convenient flake and I set off down to hunt for survey stations – surely if need be I could fashion some prussic loops from tackle sack draw-cords or something. We obviously should have had more faith though since it was indeed the very same climb. This was a bigger pitch though and so there wasn't enough rope to use half of it as a 2:1 lifeline. I warned Duncan of this, who warned Yang via Apple (It came across as important apparently not so much for starting with "Apple, this is very important..." but because it was the first bit of clear English from Duncan all expedition), who replied (again via Apple) that it was fine he'd do it his own way, thank you very much. "But the way you did it last time won't work." "I know, you told me." "Yes, but you're still rigging it the same as before." "Don't worry." After ten minutes of this Duncan gave in, rigged it himself and Apple set off down. We ate the last chocolate bar (Sorry everyone else!) and watched farmer 1,

Kevin and Julia descend. Farmer 2 descended hand-over-hand again, although not without considerable Elvis leg this time around. Yang had a play with abseiling on an Italian Hitch, somewhat resembling a learner driver practicing clutch control, and then finally Duncan and a pull-through, leaving only the trudge up to and through the showcave before a very late dinner with a very relieved looking pair of farmers. 11½ hours underground and so not a bad beginners trip for most of the party. There was even a beer or two left as we entered the numbers (over 10km now) and told Erin just how much more cave we'd found to survey. "We need a holiday" declared Erin, and no-one else disagreed. "How about tomorrow" and no one else disagreed – so it was with happy thoughts of no caving for a while that we headed to bed.

-Matt

DCRO call out to Knotlow 21 May.

Ralph & Margaret had joined Dave Webb & Paul Mortimer (Nat. Trust) on a quick trip down Knotlow, the idea being to drive over to Hill House afterwards where Len & Darren were busy "digging". In the event Margaret managed to fall about 4m ending up in the chamber where the routes to The Bung & Waterfall Chamber diverge. Suspecting hip injuries, Ralph initiated a call out at 12.30.

The rescue went extremely quickly with M on her way to hospital by 4.30.

Fortunately, she had no broken bones but if you ask her nicely she might show you her bruises! In addition to those involved Darren, Len, Jenny D and "Big" Andy were present at the scene. Nine other members indicated their willingness to turn out if required.

This, the first genuine call-out to DCRO for a while went very smoothly, thanks to all who were there or expressed a willingness to turn out. If you didn't get a call either you did, and you didn't answer or Marguerite considered enough were available should further personnel be required.

Meets

Sat 31 May	Lower L Churn etc.	Yorks	all abilities.
Sat 7/8 June	Oxclose	Derbys	lead mine
Sun 8 June	Stoney Mid.	Derbys	DCRO Ex (all welcome)
Sat 14 June	Nickergrove	Derbys	lead mine
Sat 21 June	Nent Head	N Yorks	w/end trip-lead mines
Sun 22 June	Knock Fell		
Sat 28 June	Og. L. Parc	N Wales	lead mine
Wed 2 July	DCRO	Buxton	training
Sat 5 July	DCRO	Castleton	Collection & duck race
Sat 5 July	DCRO	Winster	Social event
Sat 12 July	PyGhent/Gt Douk	Yorks	all abilities
Sun 20 July	Matlock Mine	Derbys	lead mine
Sat 26 July	Dan yr ogof	S Wales	weekend?
Sun 3 Aug	Magnetometer	Yorks	SRT
Sat 16 Aug	Box Stone Mine	Derbys.	
Sun 24 Aug	Ibeth Peril	Yorks	beginners
Sat 30 Aug	Streaks	Derbys.	Beginners
Sun 31 Aug	God's Bridge	Yorks	

As usual there are other trips as well both mid-week (day & evening) and weekends, use your dog & bone. If you want something booking ring John M.

Missing Caver:

Our DCRO training officer must have spent months planning this one! *“Vince Mole” a 35-year-old diabetic lives with his mother, non-driver who caves (almost) exclusively in the local area was missing, as was his caving kit. He goes caving (digging) almost every day but as his caving partner is on holiday he must be alone. Being a diabetic he is never late for meals, his tea was at 4 and its now 7.30. The two cavers hde discovered a “new” caving area (in the middle of Buxton!) with literally hundreds of shafts (recognisable as being square or circular with metal lids- get the drift!) Most of them are locked; those that are not have details (on waterproof pvc) attached.*

Our control was conveniently in the dining room of “The Railway” in Buxton town centre. A call was made to Mrs Mole who was unable to help because by now she was either drunk or high on some noxious substance- ah well it was worth a try! The police were asked to check all the local pubs (including The Railway) and hospitals for Vince. Teams were then despatched to search the area, which had been divided into five sections.

The information found on the “open” shafts was communicated back to control who had to decide on what action to take. If a “descent” was required a member of the team had to leg it over to a particular house in Buxton, collect a sealed envelope, leg it back to the entrance and then read out the contents that were then reported back to control. (At least they didn’t have to actually DESCEND the holes!) Needless to say various problems cropped up such as bad air, old ropes, digging equipment, flattened grass, boot prints, rucksacks (initials VM) complex systems, roof falls etc.

At one point a message came through from Vince’s mate informing us that the search area should be extended but due to the wonders of modern communication this went direct to one of the teams (who had lost communications with control) who used their initiative and searched the area anyway.

You can imagine what it was like in the control that was severely undermanned with messages coming in on two radio systems and several mobile phones all at the same time! At 9.45, with the controllers on the verge of a nervous breakdown, the exercise was terminated and the teams withdrawn. This proved to be fortuitous as the next sealed envelope involved a team member getting hurt and having to be stretchered through the town centre back to control. This could have proved embarrassing, as we had already been “clocked” on numerous CCTV monitors poking about in some very suspicious locations! Fortunately no one was arrested but I suspect some constable is now sifting through miles of footage wondering what these strange characters were doing on their hands and knees crawling about Safeway car park.

As we sat down for our debrief “Vince Mole” rang in to say that he was sat in the pub in Dent and was sorry for all the trouble he had caused! All in all a really well thought out “incident” that certainly tested our initiative, decision-making skills and communications. Our discussions got round to the subject of how quiet it was on the rescue front and how to keep teams motivated. Little did we know that in around 12 hours most of those present would be out on a genuine “shout”--- but that’s another story! RJ.

